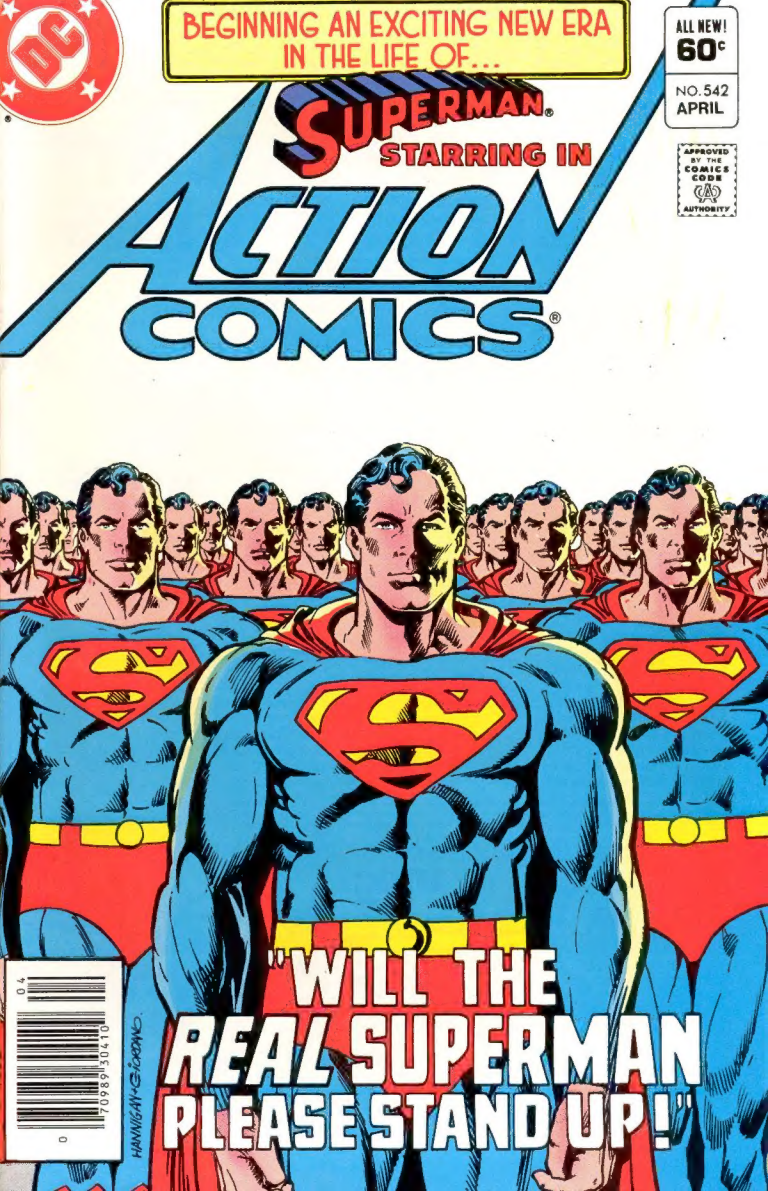
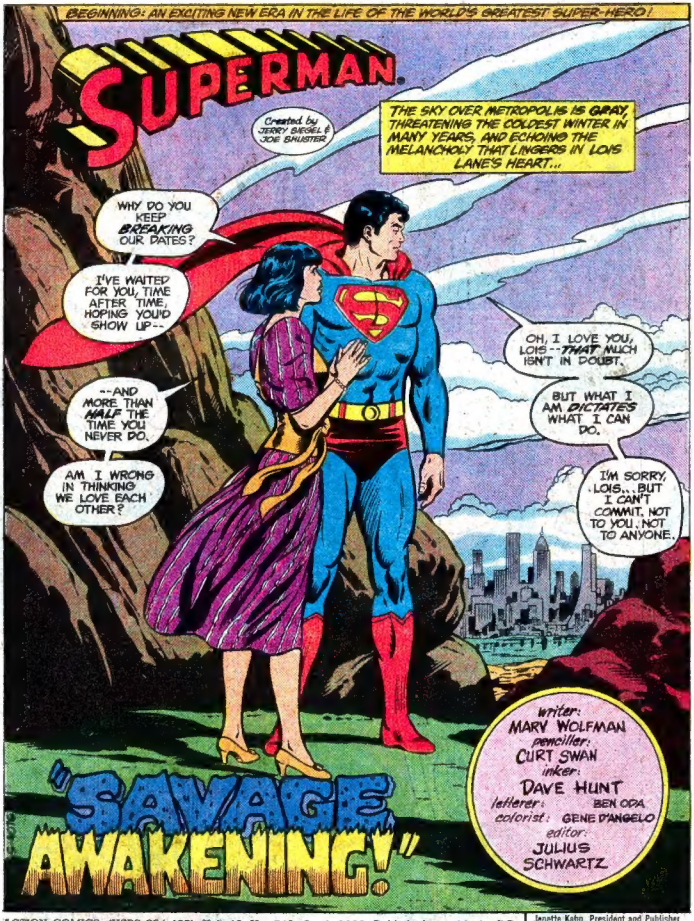

BEGINNING AN EXCITING NEW ERA IN THE LIFE OF...
SUPERMAN
STARRING IN
ACTION COMICS
ALL NEW!
60¢
NO. 542
APRIL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"WILL THE REAL SUPERMAN PLEASE STAND UP!"
HANNIGAN & GIORDANO


BEGINNING: AN EXCITING NEW ERA IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HERO!
SUPERMAN.
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
THE SKY OVER METROPOLIS IS GRAY, THREATENING THE COLDEST WINTER IN MANY YEARS, AND ECHOING THE MELANCHOLY THAT LINGERS IN LOIS LANE'S HEART...
WHY DO YOU KEEP BREAKING OUR DATES?
I'VE WAITED FOR YOU, TIME AFTER TIME, HOPING YOU'D SHOW UP--
--AND MORE THAN HALF THE TIME YOU NEVER DO.
AM I WRONG IN THINKING WE LOVE EACH OTHER?
OH, I LOVE YOU, LOIS--THAT MUCH ISN'T IN DOUBT.
BUT WHAT I AM DICTATES WHAT I CAN DO.
I'M SORRY, LOIS... BUT I CAN'T COMMIT, NOT TO YOU, NOT TO ANYONE.
"SAVAGE AWAKENING!"
writer: MARV WOLFMAN
penciller: CURT SWAN
inker: DAVE HUNT
letterer: BEN ODA
colorist: GENE D'ANGELO
editor: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

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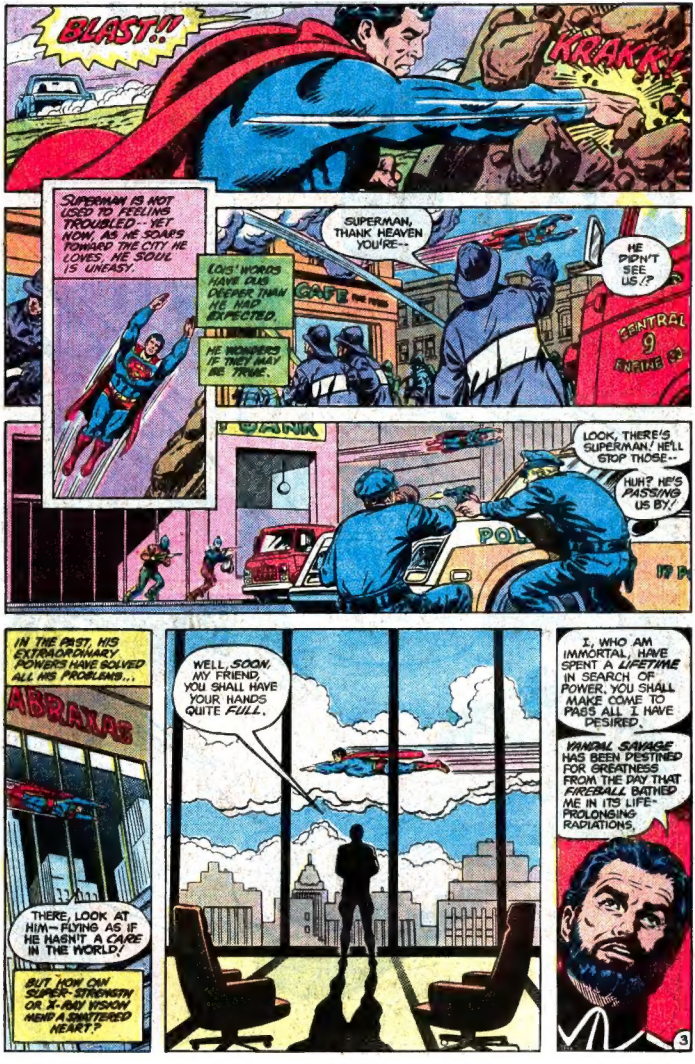
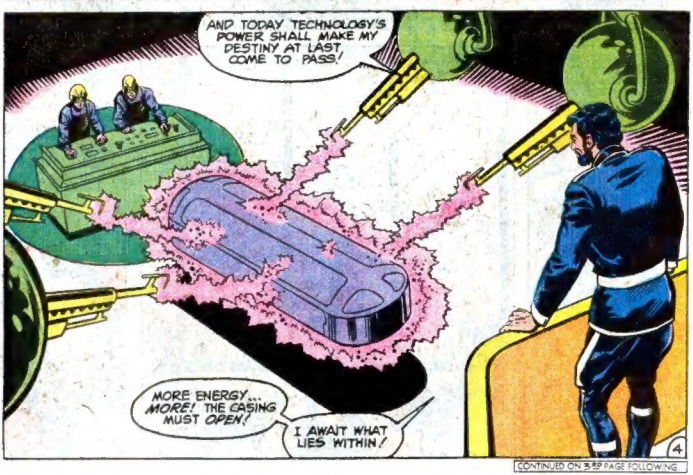
THAT OLD LINE? C'MON, PAL, I'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE. MY GOD, YOU'VE BEEN TELLING ME THAT FOR YEARS!
YOU'RE SOUNDING LIKE A BROKEN RECORD!
THOSE ARE MY FEELINGS, I'M SORRY.
ARE YOU? MY LOVE, SOMEHOW I DOUBT IT. IT'S NOT THAT YOU CAN'T COMMIT--IT'S THAT YOU WON'T!
YOU'RE AFRAID OF REVEALING YOUR INNER FEELINGS! THE GREAT MAN OF STEEL'S PROBABLY GOT A HEART OF MUSH!
YOU'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD, HAVE YOU? LOOK OUT AT METROPOLIS--THAT'S MY CITY. EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE DEPEND ON ME.
BEYOND THAT IS A WORLD I'VE SWORN TO PROTECT.
AND BEYOND EVEN THAT IS A UNIVERSE THAT COMES UNDER MY JURISDICTION.
OH, GREAT--IT'S NOT TWO HUNDRED BILLION PEOPLE COMPETING WITH ME FOR YOU--IT'S TWO HUNDRED BILLION PLANETS!
SUPERMAN, YOU'VE DENIED YOURSELF LOVE, YOU'VE DENIED YOURSELF ANY REAL LIFE.
I DON'T DO THIS FOR MYSELF.
OH, YOU DON'T? OH, YOU BURY YOURSELF IN YOUR WORK SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO COMMIT YOURSELF.
YOU SAVE EVERYONE'S LIFE, BUT YOU'VE LOST YOUR OWN HEART.
LOIS, CAN I TAKE YOU HOME? I'D RATHER BE ALONE NOW.
NO, THANKS, LOVE. I KNOW THE WAY. BESIDES, I GROOVE HERE, MYSELF. REMEMBER--?
LISTEN, YOU HAVE MY ADDRESS. IF YOU CAN EVER BREAK FREE OF THAT BOX YOU'VE SURROUNDED YOURSELF WITH, COME BY.
I MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THERE, BUT KEEP TRYING.
2


BLAST!!
KRAK-K-
SUPERMAN IS NOT USED TO FEELING TROUBLED -- YET NOW, AS HE SOARS TOWARD THE CITY HE LOVES, HE SOUL IS UNEASY.
LOIS' WORDS HAVE DISTURBED HIM IN WAYS HE HADN'T EXPECTED.
HE WONDERS IF THEY MAY BE TRUE.
SUPERMAN, THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE--
HE DIDN'T SEE US!?
CAFE
CENTRAL 9 ENGINE
BANK
LOOK, THERE'S SUPERMAN! HE'LL STOP THOSE--
HUH? HE'S PASSING US BY!
POL
IN THE PAST, HIS EXTRAORDINARY POWERS HAVE SOLVED ALL HIS PROBLEMS...
ABRAXAS
THERE, LOOK AT HIM--FLYING AS IF HE HASN'T A CARE IN THE WORLD!
BUT HOW CAN SUPER-STRENGTH OR X-RAY VISION MEND A SHATTERED HEART?
WELL, SOON, MY FRIEND, YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR HANDS QUITE FULL.
I, WHO AM IMMORTAL, HAVE SPENT A LIFETIME IN SEARCH OF POWER. YOU SHALL MAKE COME TO PASS ALL I HAVE DESIRED.
YANDAL SAVAGE HAS BEEN DESTINED FOR GREATNESS FROM THE DAY THAT FIREBALL BATHED ME IN ITS LIFE-PROLONGING RADIATIONS.
3

I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE ADAPTING ...CHANGING, WITH EACH PASSING GENERATION.
WHEN MAGES WERE THE SOURCE OF POWER, I WIELDED THE POWERS MYSTIC.
IN THE DAYS WHEN AN EMPEROR'S OFF-CHANCE REMARK MIGHT CAUSE AN ARMY TO MARCH INTO BATTLE--
--I RULED UPON THE VELVET THRONES OF COUNTRIES LARGE AND SMALL.
BUT TODAY, STRENGTH IS NO LOWER POWER-- A FACT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT YET LEARNED.
TODAY THE SEAT OF POWER HAS SHIFTED-- THE MEN OF MIGHT BOW BEFORE THE MEN OF MIND!
TODAY TECHNOLOGY IS POWER!


AND TODAY TECHNOLOGY'S POWER SHALL MAKE MY DESTINY AT LAST COME TO PASS!
MORE ENERGY... MORE! THE CASING MUST OPEN!
I AWAIT WHAT LIES WITHIN!
4

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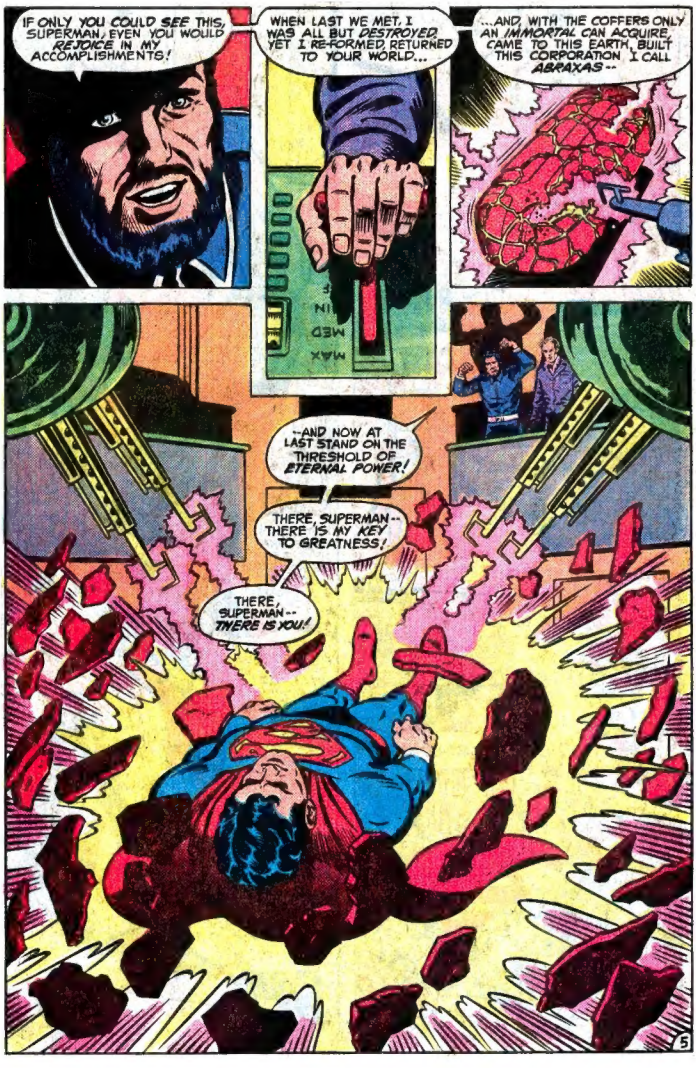
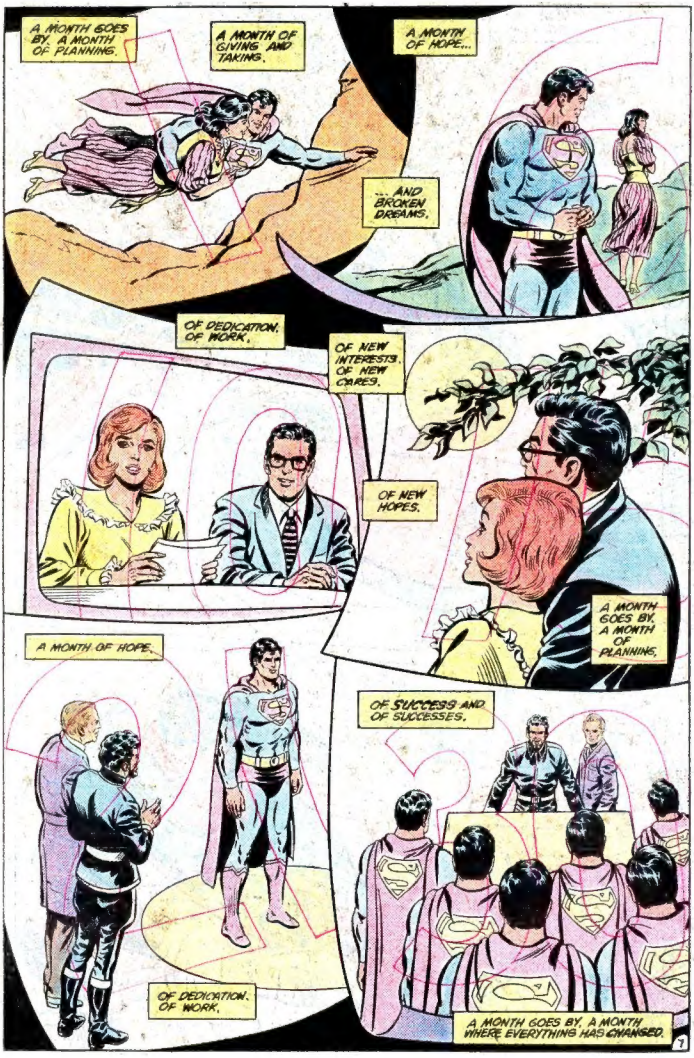

IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE THIS, SUPERMAN, EVEN YOU WOULD REJOICE IN MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS!
WHEN LAST WE MET, I WAS ALL BUT DESTROYED, YET I RE-FORMED, RETURNED TO YOUR WORLD...
...AND, WITH THE COFFERS ONLY AN IMMORTAL CAN ACQUIRE, CAME TO THIS EARTH, BUILT THIS CORPORATION I CALL ABRAXAS --
--AND NOW AT LAST STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF ETERNAL POWER!
THERE, SUPERMAN-- THERE IS MY KEY TO GREATNESS!
THERE, SUPERMAN-- THERE IS YOU!
5

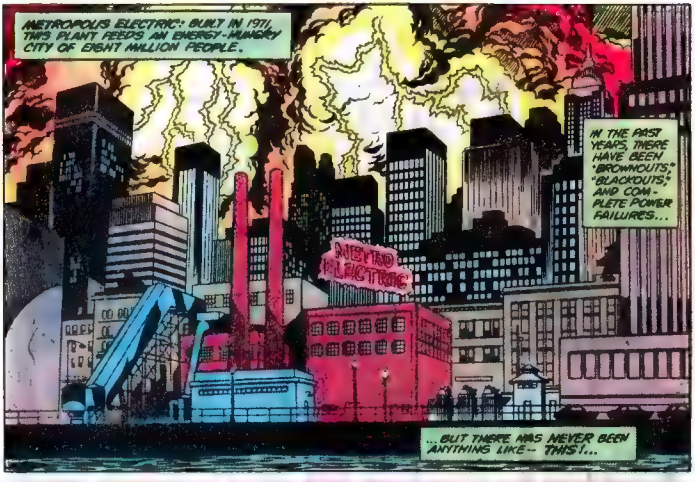
IS HE PERFECT? HE MUST BE IF I'M TO SUCCEED!
WE'RE READY TO BEGIN THE TESTS...
THEN WHAT DO YOU WAIT FOR? DO SO NOW!
THIS LASER HAS TEN THOUSAND TIMES THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE OF AN ORDINARY BEAM.
HE STANDS, VANDAL SAVAGE -- HE STILL STANDS!
WE SHIFT FROM HEAT TO ABSOLUTE ZERO.
FANTASTIC!
HE CAN'T BE HURT BY ANY ORDINARY MEANS!
GENTLEMEN, HE'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! HE'S WHAT I'VE PRAYED FOR!
YOU'VE SERVED ME WELL AND YOU SHALL BE AMPLY REWARDED.
MY FRIENDS, YOUR GENIUS COUPLED WITH MINE HAS GIVEN ME SUCCESS ON MY FIRST STEP TOWARD ULTIMATE GREATNESS!
I SALUTE YOU, GENTLEMEN. I SALUTE YOU!

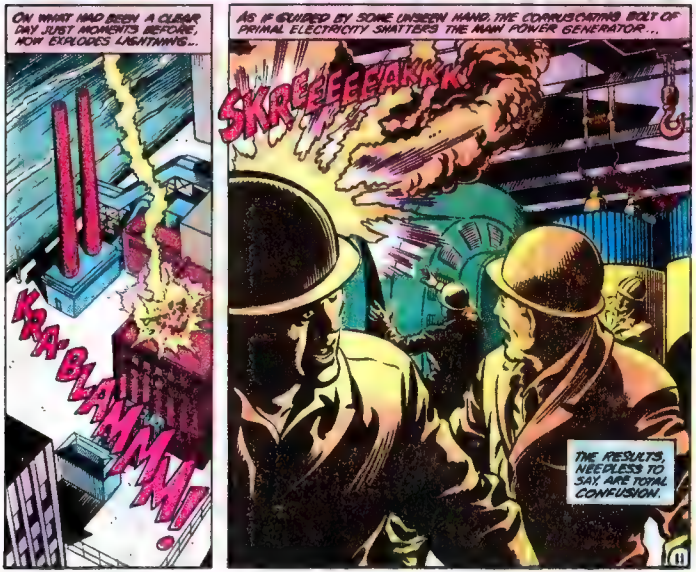

A MONTH GOES BY. A MONTH OF PLANNING.
A MONTH OF GIVING AND TAKING.
A MONTH OF HOPE...
... AND BROKEN DREAMS.
OF DEDICATION. OF WORK.
OF NEW INTERESTS. OF NEW CARES.
OF NEW HOPES.
A MONTH GOES BY. A MONTH OF PLANNING.
A MONTH OF HOPE.
OF SUCCESS AND OF SUCCESSES.
OF DEDICATION. OF WORK.
A MONTH GOES BY. A MONTH WHERE EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.

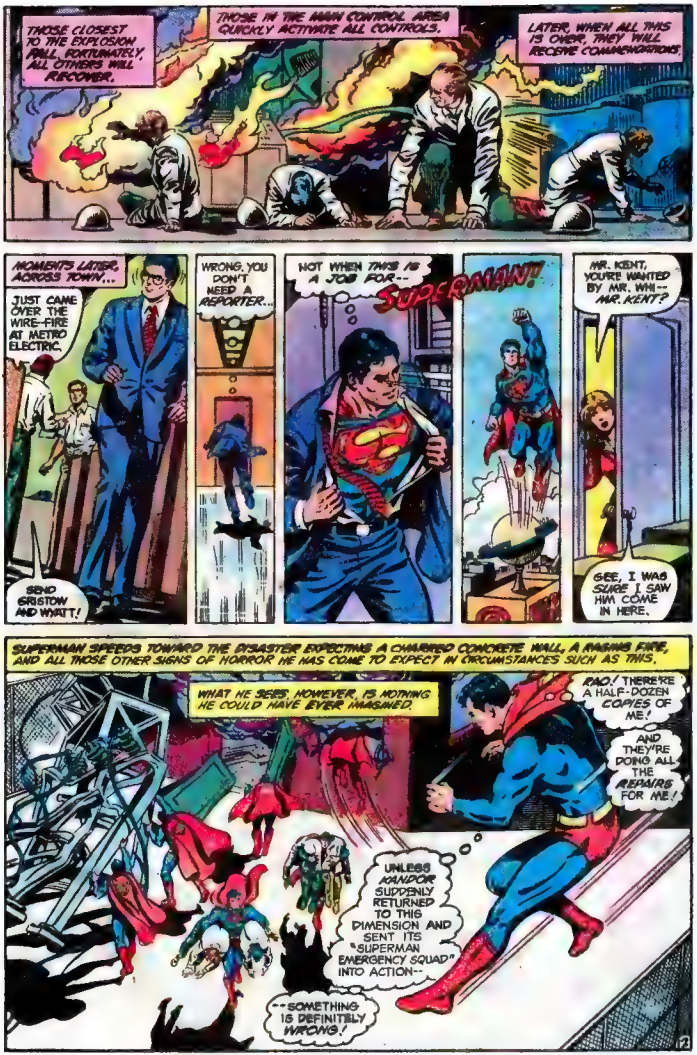
AND LIFE GOES ON... ALWAYS GOES ON...
WELL, WELL, I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU LASER-ERASERS!
YOU COULDN'T STAY HIDDEN FROM ME FOR LONG.
SEEMS LIKE HALF MY LIFE IS SPENT PLUGGING UP BOILING VOLCANOES.
ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL HAVE TO FIGURE A WAY TO PREVENT THEM BEFORE THEY BLOW!
PEOPLE OF EARTH, WE DEMAND YOUR INSTANTANEOUS SURRENDER!
SORRY, GUYS, BUT DIDN'T ANYONE TELL YOU THAT I LIVE HERE?
THIS PLANET IS OFF LIMITS!
YOU'VE DESTROYED MY ROBOT! CURSE YOU, SUPERMAN!
NO WAY, LUTHOR. DON'T YOU KNOW, I NEVER CURSE!
8
CONTINUED ON 2 PAGE FOLLOWING

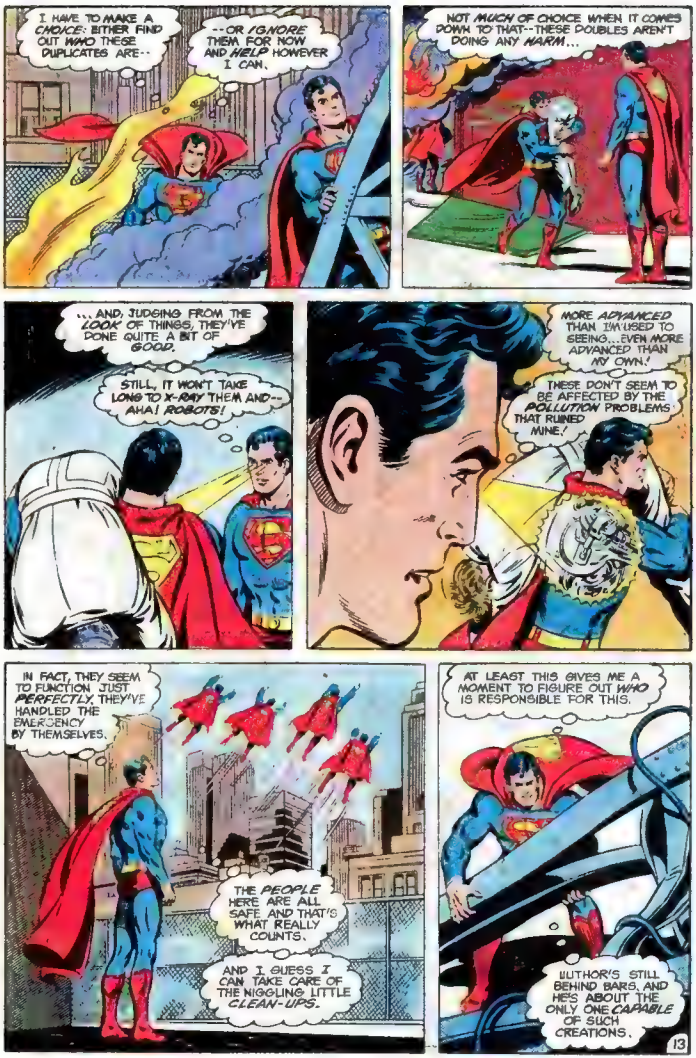
METROPOLIS...
YEAH, I READ HIS APPLICATION...
HIS CREDENTIALS SEEM IN LINE. HIRE HIM.
HAVE HIM START TOMORROW... I'LL GET SOMEONE TO CLEAR OUT A DESK.
PERRY, CAN I SPEAK WITH YOU A MOMENT?
ONE MOMENT, LOIS. I'M ALSO LOOKING FOR A TABLE BOY UP IN SYNDICATION. SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
OKAY, LOIS, WHAT ARE YOU BOTHERING ME ABOUT?
I'D LIKE A NEW ASSIGNMENT, PERRY... PREFERABLY ONE THAT'S OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
SOMETHING WRONG, LOIS? I'VE OFFERED YOU THOSE ASSIGNMENTS A THOUSAND TIMES, BUT YOU ALWAYS TURN ME DOWN.
USUALLY BECAUSE OF OUR RED-CAPED FRIEND.
WELL, THAT'S GOING NOWHERE FAST.
LOOK, I NEED SOME TIME AWAY--TO THINK. CAN YOU HELP YOUR FAVORITE REPORTER?
MATTER OF FACT, LOIS, I HAVE JUST THE ASSIGNMENT.
IT'S A SET OF INTERVIEWS--IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
HANDLE THIS RIGHT AND YOU MIGHT BE IN LINE FOR A PULITZER!
YOU WON'T HEAR ANY COMPLAINTS FROM THIS CORNER.
THANKS, PERRY--BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING--IS SOMETHING WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN EDGY OF LATE.
THAT WILL BE ALL, LOIS. GOODBYE.
9

SOMETHING'S WRONG. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HEARD LOIS SOUND THAT WAY BEFORE.
WELL, SHE'S COMING OUT. I MIGHT AS WELL CONFRONT HER...
THERE'S AN EDGE TO HER VOICE.
PERRY WHITE EDITOR
LOIS, I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING. WHY DID YOU ASK FOR A MIDDLE EAST ASSIGNMENT?
BECAUSE I'VE FORSAKEN A HUNDRED SUCH ASSIGNMENTS IN THE PAST, INSISTING THAT I HAD TO STAY IN METROPOLIS.
CLARK KENT
BUT THOSE DAYS ARE OVER, CLARK. I'M NOT WAITING FOR SUPERMAN TO MAKE ALL MY DREAMS COME TRUE.
I DON'T EVEN THINK I'M WAITING FOR SUPERMAN ANY LONGER AT ALL.
WHAT'S WITH LOIS?
SHE WOULDN'T SAY, BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE AN EINSTEIN TO FIGURE IT OUT.
SUPERMAN?
THEN I FEEL SORRY FOR HER.
I HOPED, TOO -- FOR A VERY LONG TIME, UNTIL I GAVE UP HOPING AND I... UHH...
WHAT IS IT, LANA? WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING. JUST NOTHING.
10


METROPOLIS ELECTRIC: BUILT IN 1971, THIS PLANT FEEDS AN ENERGY-HUNGRY CITY OF EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE.
METRO ELECTRIC
IN THE PAST YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN "BROWNOUTS," "BLACKOUTS," AND COMPLETE POWER FAILURES...
...BUT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LIKE-- THIS!...

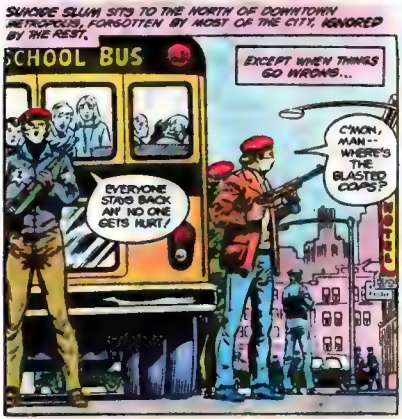

ON WHAT HAD BEEN A CLEAR DAY JUST MOMENTS BEFORE, NOW EXPLODES LIGHTNING...
KRA-BLAAAMM!
AS IF GUIDED BY SOME UNSEEN HAND, THE COARUSCATING BOLT OF PRIMAL ELECTRICITY SHATTERS THE MAIN POWER GENERATOR...
SKREEEEEAKK!
THE RESULTS, NEEDLESS TO SAY, ARE TOTAL CONFUSION.


THOSE CLOSEST TO THE EXPLOSION WILL, FORTUNATELY, ALL OTHERS WILL RECOVER.
THOSE IN THE MAIN CONTROL AREA QUICKLY ACTIVATE ALL CONTROLS.
LATER, WHEN ALL THIS IS OVER, THEY WILL RECEIVE COMMENDATIONS.
MOMENTS LATER, ACROSS TOWN...
JUST CAME OVER THE WIRE--FIRE AT METRO ELECTRIC.
SEND GRISTOW AND WYATT!
WRONG, YOU DON'T NEED A REPORTER...
NOT WHEN THIS IS A JOB FOR--
SUPERMAN!
MR. KENT, YOU'RE WANTED BY MR. WH!-- MR. KENT?
SEE, I WAS SURE I SAW HIM COME IN HERE.
SUPERMAN SPEEDS TOWARD THE DISASTER EXPECTING A CHARRED CONCRETE WALL, A RAGING FIRE, AND ALL THOSE OTHER SIGNS OF HORROR HE HAS COME TO EXPECT IN CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS THIS.
WHAT HE SEES, HOWEVER, IS NOTHING HE COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED.
RAO! THERE'RE A HALF-DOZEN COPIES OF ME!
AND THEY'RE DOING ALL THE REPAIRS FOR ME!
UNLESS RAO/OR SUDDENLY RETURNED TO THIS DIMENSION AND SENT ITS "SUPERMAN EMERGENCY SQUAD" INTO ACTION--
--SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY WRONG!

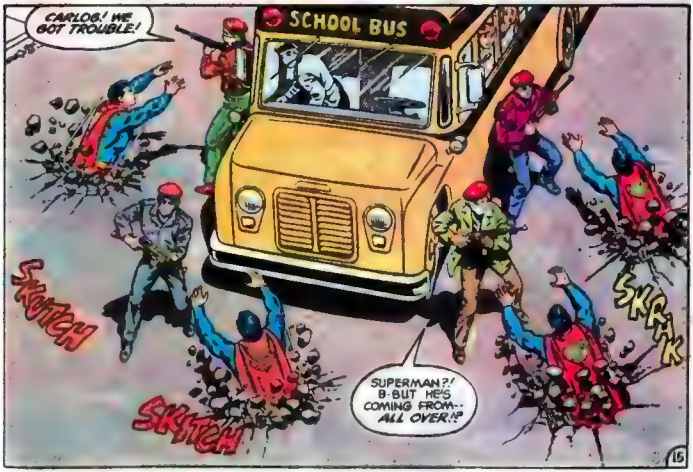

I HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE: EITHER FIND OUT WHO THESE DUPLICATES ARE--
--OR IGNORE THEM FOR NOW AND HELP HOWEVER I CAN.
NOT MUCH OF CHOICE WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO THAT--THESE DOUBLES AREN'T DOING ANY HARM...
...AND, JUDGING FROM THE LOOK OF THINGS, THEY'VE DONE QUITE A BIT OF GOOD.
STILL, IT WON'T TAKE LONG TO X-RAY THEM AND--AHA! ROBOTS!
MORE ADVANCED THAN I'M USED TO SEEING...EVEN MORE ADVANCED THAN MY OWN!
THESE DON'T SEEM TO BE AFFECTED BY THE POLLUTION PROBLEMS THAT RUINED MINE.
IN FACT, THEY SEEM TO FUNCTION JUST PERFECTLY. THEY'VE HANDLED THE EMERGENCY BY THEMSELVES.
THE PEOPLE HERE ARE ALL SAFE AND THAT'S WHAT REALLY COUNTS.
AND I GUESS I CAN TAKE CARE OF THE NIGGLING LITTLE CLEAN-UPS.
AT LEAST THIS GIVES ME A MOMENT TO FIGURE OUT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS.
AUTHOR'S STILL BEHIND BARS, AND HE'S ABOUT THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF SUCH CREATIONS.

NO USE GUESSING WHEN I CAN SIMPLY FOLLOW THEM BACK TO THEIR--
THEY'RE GONE?
CAN'T EVEN PICK THEM UP WITH MY TELESCOPIC VISION.
OBVIOUSLY SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT ME TO KNOW WHO HE IS.
WELL, YOU'VE PIQUED MY INTEREST.
EXCELLENT. JUST THE REACTION I WAS HOPING FOR.
DAILY PLANET
TOO MANY SUPERMEN?
NOT FOR THIS TOWN!
NOT WANTING TO SOUND JEALOUS, SUPERMAN SAID NOTHING TO THE PRESS...
...WHICH MAKES THEM THINK MY ROBOTS BELONG TO HIM.
WELL, LET THEM THINK THAT FOR ANOTHER DAY. LET THEM ACCEPT MY CREATIONS.
TOMORROW I WILL REVEAL THEIR TRUE ORIGIN!
THUS, TOMORROW BEGINS "THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF SUPERMAN!"
24 HOURS PASS AND...
YOU CERTAIN THAT'S WHAT THE NOTE SAID? "THIS IS A GIFT TO THE PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS FROM THE ABRAXAS CORPORATION."
TROUBLE DOWN IN SUICIDE SLUM. CALL THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. WHAT'S ABRAXAS?
TERRORISTS ARE HOLDING A SCHOOL BUS, THREATENING THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN.
WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN TODAY WHILE I WAS ON DUTY? WHY?
14

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?
AND WHAT'S-- "ALBUQUERQUE"?
HA HMPH!


SUICIDE SLUM SITS TO THE NORTH OF DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS, FORGOTTEN BY MOST OF THE CITY, IGNORED BY THE REST.
SCHOOL BUS
EXCEPT WHEN THINGS GO WRONG...
C'MON, MAN-- WHERE'S THE BLASTER COPS?
EVERYONE STAYS BACK AN' NO ONE GETS HURT!

THIS 'GENTLEMAN' HERE IS A PROFESSIONAL TERRORIST. HE DOESN'T CARE WHO HE WORKS FOR, WHAT CAUSE HE ESPOUSES, OR WHO MIGHT GET KILLED.
WE WANNA MAKE OUR DEMANDS!
PLEASE DO NOT HURT ANY OF THE CHILDREN. TELL US WHAT YOU WANT.
AT LAST! WHERE YOU BEEN HIDIN', MAN? WHAT WE WANT IS EIGHT MIL--


CARLOS! WE GOT TROUBLE!
SCHOOL BUS
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
SKRAK
SUPERMAN?! B-BUT HE'S COMING FROM-- ALL OVER!?
15

WITHIN SECONDS, TERRORIST CONTROL IS SHATTERED...
SCHOOL BUS
...AS SILENT, SUPER SENTINELS COMPLETE THE MISSION AT HAND.
EXTRA DAILY PLANET EXTRA
SUPERMEN STOP TERRORISTS!
DAILY PLANET
SUPERMEN PREVENT BUILDING COLLAPSE!
METROPOLIS EAGLE
SUPERMEN PREVENT NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE!
NUCLEAR SUBMARINE DISASTER PREVENTED!
PLANET
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE REAL SUPERMAN?
AND IS HE REALLY NEEDED?

DAYS SPEED BY. THEN FINALLY...
ARE THOSE YOUR BAGS, LOIS?
YOU'RE REALLY LEAVING?
YOU BET, CLARK.
I'M GOING TO PROVE THAT LOIS LANE IS STILL THE BEST REPORTER THIS TOWN EVER SAW!
BUT GOING AWAY--? DID YOU SEE THESE HEADLINES?
IT LOOKS LIKE SUPERMAN COULD USE YOU NOW!
WELL, I GUESS HE'LL JUST HAVE TO GET ALONG ON HIS OWN.
TOODALOO, GUYS. SEE YA IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS.
I GUESS HE WILL AT THAT. STRANGE, I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY LOIS WOULD LEAVE SUPERMAN IN THE LURCH.
I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD BE HAPPY OR JEALOUS OR--WHAT.
CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT TOO MUCH, THOUGH... HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S BEHIND THESE BOGUS SUPERMEN.
THEY HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG..YET--BUT I'M CERTAIN THEY'RE UP TO NO GOOD!
CLARK, DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS? THERE'S A PRESS CONFERENCE DOWN AT THE ABRAXAS CORPORATION!
I'D PROBABLY BE MORE IMPRESSED, JIMMY, IF I KNEW WHAT THAT WAS!
THAT'S JUST THE THING, CLARK--NOBODY DOES!
EXCEPT THAT ALL THOSE DUPLICATE SUPERMEN ARE THERE!
ER, YOU GO, JIM. I'M REALLY TIED UP HERE WITH PAPER WORK.
17
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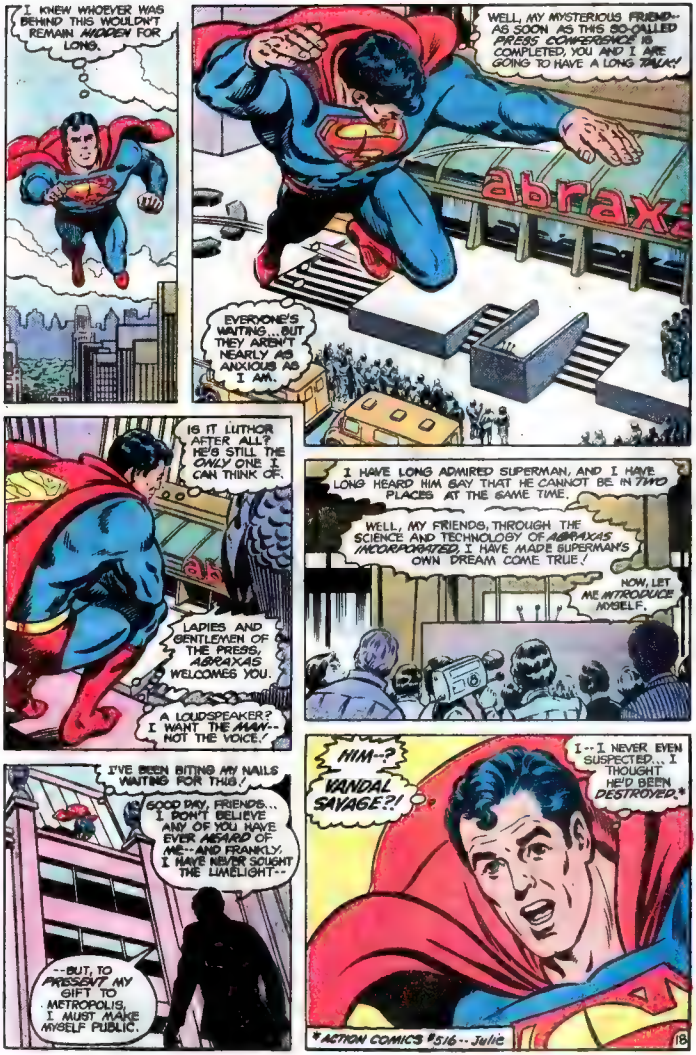
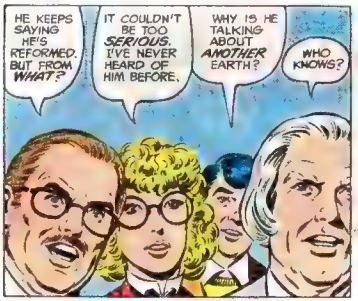
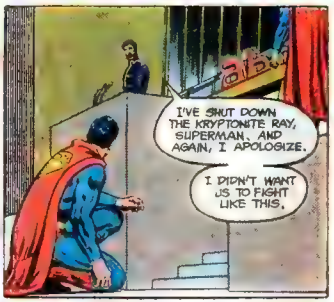

I KNEW WHOEVER WAS BEHIND THIS WOULDN'T REMAIN HIDDEN FOR LONG.
WELL, MY MYSTERIOUS FRIEND-- AS SOON AS THIS SO-CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE IS COMPLETED, YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE A LONG TALK!
abraxas
EVERYONE'S WAITING... BUT THEY AREN'T NEARLY AS ANXIOUS AS I AM.
IS IT LUTHOR AFTER ALL? HE'S STILL THE ONLY ONE I CAN THINK OF.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS, ABRAXAS WELCOMES YOU.
A LOUDSPEAKER? I WANT THE MAN-- NOT THE VOICE!
I HAVE LONG ADMIRED SUPERMAN, AND I HAVE LONG HEARD HIM SAY THAT HE CANNOT BE IN TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME.
WELL, MY FRIENDS, THROUGH THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF ABRAXAS INCORPORATED, I HAVE MADE SUPERMAN'S OWN DREAM COME TRUE!
NOW, LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF.
I'VE BEEN BITING MY NAILS WAITING FOR THIS!
GOOD DAY, FRIENDS... I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF YOU HAVE EVER HEARD OF ME--AND FRANKLY, I HAVE NEVER SOUGHT THE LIMELIGHT--
--BUT, TO PRESENT MY GIFT TO METROPOLIS, I MUST MAKE MYSELF PUBLIC.
HIM--?
VANDAL SAVAGE?!
I--I NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED... I THOUGHT HE'D BEEN DESTROYED.*
*ACTION COMICS #516 -- Julie
18

MY NAME IS VANDAL SAVAGE, AND I'VE COME TO PRESENT THIS MIRACLE OF SCIENCE TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS FAIR CITY.
I KNOW YOU WOULD QUESTION MY MOTIVES, SO PERMIT ME TO EXPLAIN.
NO WONDER MY NECK HAIRS WERE BRISTLING... EVEN WITHOUT KNOWING SAVAGE WAS BEHIND THIS--
--I WAS ABLE TO PICK UP THE SMELL OF SOMETHING ROTTEN IN THE AIR.
FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT I AM NOT OF YOUR EARTH, BUT OF A PARALLEL EARTH... SIMILAR TO YOURS IN MANY WAYS.
ON MY WORLD I WAS NOT A GOOD MAN. I DID THINGS THAT NOW I AM ASHAMED OF.
I REALIZED THE ERROR OF MY WAYS, BUT KNEW IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO STAY WHERE I WAS--
--THUS I CAME TO YOUR EARTH TO BEGIN MY LIFE AS A BENEFACTOR TO MANKIND.
MY CREATIONS ARE MY FIRST MEANS OF REDEMPTION--WHILE NOT AS POWERFUL AS SUPERMAN, THEY ARE DESIGNED TO SUBSTITUTE FOR HIM...
...ONLY WHERE HE IS UNAVAILABLE.
SAVAGE, YOU'RE A LIAR! ON EARTH-TWO, YOU'RE CONSIDERED THE WORST OF A MISERABLE LOT.
WHATEVER YOU'RE PLANNING, YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!
MAKE CERTAIN YOU GET THIS SHOT! I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN SUPERMAN THIS ... ANGRY!
DON'T WORRY, LANA--IF SAVAGE EVEN BREATHES FUNNY, I'LL CATCH IT.
YOU'RE WRONG, SUPERMAN. I WISH I COULD CONVINCE YOU WITH MY WORDS AND DEEDS--
AAGHHH!
--BUT UNTIL I CAN...
19

I AM TRULY SORRY ABOUT THIS, BUT I HAD TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS.
I KNEW YOU WOULD NEVER BELIEVE ME...

...BUT WHAT I SAY IS TRUE. I'VE FORSAKEN MY EARTH--MY EXILE- IS TO PAY THE PIPER FOR WHAT I HAD DONE.
AND I HAVE REFORMED, AS YOU SHALL LEARN FOR YOURSELF.


HE KEEPS SAYING HE'S REFORMED. BUT FROM WHAT?
IT COULDN'T BE TOO SERIOUS. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM BEFORE.
WHY IS HE TALKING ABOUT ANOTHER EARTH?
WHO KNOWS?

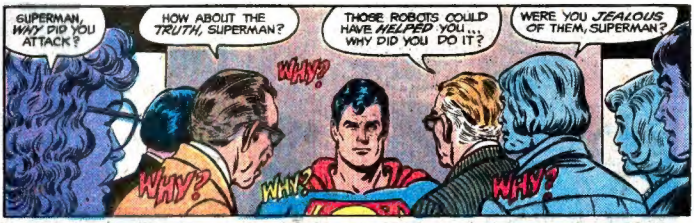

I'VE SHUT DOWN THE KRYPTONITE RAY, SUPERMAN. AND AGAIN, I APOLOGIZE.
I DIDN'T WANT US TO FIGHT LIKE THIS.

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT WITH A STRAIGHT FACE, SAVAGE?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR SCHEME IS, BUT IF YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE BOGUS SUPERMEN--

--THEN THEY'RE AS EVIL AND TWISTED AS YOU ARE.!

I DON'T KNOW HOW POWERFUL HE'S MADE THESE THINGS, BUT FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE.
I STILL REMEMBER MY LAST ENCOUNTER WITH SAVAGE-- ALL TOO GRIMLY.
SKRAAKKABLAM!
HE BRIEFLY ALTERED TIME-- MADE HIMSELF THE EMPEROR OF EARTH--
--AND ALMOST DUPED ME INTO MAKING THAT TEMPORARY CATASTROPHE PERMANENT.
NO, SUPERMAN-- DON'T! PLEASE... MY ROBOTS ARE INCAPABLE OF HARMING PEOPLE!
THEY WERE CREATED TO HELP!
I'M NOT FOOLED, SAVAGE.
I'VE KNOWN YOU TOO LONG!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY YOU TRIED. THESE ROBOTS WEREN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT ME.
YOU AND LUTHOR-- ALL OF YOUR KIND. YOU NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?
IT'S BACK TO EARTH-TWO, SAVAGE-- FOR YOU AND YOUR JUNK-HEAP HEROES!
21
CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

WHY DID YOU DO THAT TO ME, SUPERMAN?
MY ROBOTS COULDN'T HAVE HURT ANYONE.
CHECK THEM OUT--THEY CAN'T DO ANY DAMAGE--IT'S NOT IN THEIR PROGRAMMING!
CUT THE GARBAGE, SAVAGE--IT'S NOT GOING TO HELP YOU.
YOU STILL THINK THIS WAS ALL SOME SORT OF HOAX, DON'T YOU?
IT WASN'T--I HAD PINNED ALL MY HOPES OF CHANGING ON ABRAXAS AND THOSE ROBOTS...
YOU COULD HAVE CHECKED ME OUT FIRST. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DESTROY THEM.
SUPERMAN, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
INSPECTOR HENDERSON, YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME. I HAVE A CANDIDATE HERE FOR METROPOLIS PRISON--VANDAL SAVAGE.
WE'VE MET. MR. SAVAGE REQUESTED A PERMIT FOR THIS PRESS CONFERENCE--
HE ALSO SAID HE THOUGHT YOU WOULD ATTACK HIM.
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME, SUPERMAN.
I DID NOTHING ILLEGAL, YET LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO ME.
IS HE RIGHT? WAS THERE ANY PROVOCATION?
NO, BUT SAVAGE IS EVIL...I KNOW HIM.
WE CHECKED HIM OUT--THERE ARE NO RECORDS OF VANDAL SAVAGE--
--NOT WITH THE POLICE, THE FBI, CIA, INTERPOL, OR ANYWHERE ELSE!
AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED--HE'S CLEAN!
IN FACT, IF HE WANTED TO, HE COULD SUE YOU--FOR DESTRUCTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY!
N...NO...I DON'T WANT ANYONE HURT. I WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP...
JUST TRYING TO HELP...


SUPERMAN, WHY DID YOU ATTACK?
HOW ABOUT THE TRUTH, SUPERMAN?
THOSE ROBOTS COULD HAVE HELPED YOU... WHY DID YOU DO IT?
WERE YOU JEALOUS OF THEM, SUPERMAN?
WHY?
WHY?
WHY?
WHY?

SORRY, BUT I HAVE NO COMMENT!
BLAST! I FELL RIGHT INTO THAT! I LOOKED LIKE A FOOL...
...AND I BET THAT'S WHAT VANDAL SAVAGE WAS AFTER ALL ALONG!

YES, OLD FRIEND, I CAN ALMOST READ YOUR MIND--YOU ARE CORRECT!
AND I'VE SUCCEEDED IN THE FIRST STEP OF MY PLAN!
YOU THINK WITH YOUR FISTS, NEVER WITH YOUR MIND!

I CAN MANIPULATE THAT... SLOWLY CHANGE PUBLIC OPINION CONCERNING YOU! NOT IN A DAY, MAYBE NOT EVEN IN A YEAR.
BUT I KNOW HOW TO PLAY YOU! ONE DAY IT WILL CHANGE!

I AM AN IMMORTAL, SUPERMAN.
I'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD, OLD ENEMY--
BUT THE QUESTION IS--DO YOU?
HA HA HA

NEXT ISSUE:
NEUTRON -- THE NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE -- RETURNS!
ON SALE FEB. 24th!
It's a date!

## DC COMICS, INC., 666 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10103

Dear Editor:

Upon completing "Half a Superman" in *ACTION* #537, I've begun to realize what awesome villainy Marv Wolfman created in the characters of Lord Satanis and Syrene. Besides kryptonite, magic and sorcery have always been the most potent methods of immobilizing *Superman*. And it strikes me as being quite ironic that no other writer until recently has created a lethal magical villain who could honestly do debilitating damage to the Man of Might. Oh sure, we've got that goofy magical imp who pops up every ninety days or so to commit his farcical antics, but his magic is more a parody than anything else.

No, *Superman* has definitely met more than his match as Mike W. Barr and Irv Novick so ably showed in this month's fascinating tale. *Superman* appeared so utterly... well, human as he clutched his scalded hand in agony on page 3. And his feeble, "I'd better leave... try to find some way to get my missing powers back before something worse happens..." proved just how frustrating this whole situation has become to him. Just consider, that poignant line was from a man who has traveled to the core of a white-hot sun! And that statement was made over a spilled cup of hot tea!

Of course, it seems "something worse" does appear to be happening to *Superman's* other half in the clutches of Syrene. My only conjecture to the outcome of this situation is that the magical qualities of the Runestone flowing through *Superman's* body will somehow work to his advantage. If not, he's in big trouble.

And to compound the present day *Superman's* problems (and for the sake of adding another plot device), we have the *Jackhammer*, who to me is just another pseudo-*Purple Pile-Driver*. *Jackhammer's* hydraulic power punch is almost laughable when you consider it a threat to *Superman*, but when you consider the present state, it actually brought about *Superman's* defeat. This cheap villain's presence in the story is an interesting diversionary tactic from the real threat at hand, but I'm sure that next issue *Jackhammer* will find himself in the slammer.

Powerful stuff ya got goin' here! I like it...a lot!

Alan Gary Giroux
Phoenix, AZ

*And you aren't alone, Alan. Praise for this multi-issue Superman-epic mounts as each issue appears. So, rather than babble on about how many letters we've gotten, let's print some of 'em!—BR*

*****

Dear Mr. Schwartz,

I've just finished reading *ACTION* #537, and I think that this series is fantastic! Sure we've seen the similar storyline of *Superman* split into two separate beings such as the popular *Superman-Red/Superman-Blue* stories and the most recent *Superman*/Clark Kent team-up in *DC COMICS PRESENTS* (which, by the way, I thought had to do with this story in *ACTION*.) We may have seen it before but we haven't seen it in this perspective with the major complications delved into so deeply.

The scene with *Superman* and Lois was short but good. Now and then, even a superman needs to tell his problems to someone. It seems as though we don't see enough of the relationship between *Superman* and Lois or even Clark and Lois. Some stories need more interaction among the characters to make them more lifelike. Develop some subplots and give the characters more flair and personality.

As for the new crook on the block, *Jackhammer*, I just hope *Superman* knocks this guy's head off before it gets too big. Even with half the powers, *Superman* could easily beat this guy, but with all the newfound problems facing him, *Superman* just can't seem to get himself together to think of a plan of action. Once *Superman* puts his Kryptonian mind to it, operating on half will be more than enough to beat this clown.

Finally, here I am at the end of the letter and I've got a few questions. First, why hasn't *Superman's* split-personality problem carried over into his other books like *SUPERMAN* and *WORLD'S FINEST*? And since you've started doing story crossovers in *BATMAN* and *DETECTIVE* and the short-but-sweet *JUSTICE LEAGUE/ALL-STAR SQUADRON* summer special, why not do the same for the Big Red "S" in *ACTION* and *SUPERMAN*?

SEAN D. McGANN
380 Harford Road
Somerdale, NJ 08083

*The split-Superman saga takes place after the stories appearing at the same time in other Superman family magazines, Sean. But we're making an effort to develop a continuity between SUPERMAN and ACTION COMICS beginning with this issue! Writers Cary Bates and Marv Wolfman will be keeping an eye on one another's work and carrying the sub-plots back and forth between the two titles. How's that for service?—BR*

*****

Dear Julie and Bob,

Well, how will *Superman-past* escape? Offhand, if I were trying to second-guess you, I would say the Runestone will turn out to be sensitive to extreme heat. Since *Superman-past* has the heat vision, I expect him to train said heat vision on the Runestone. The Runestone will then either disintegrate, melt, or do strange things to *Superman-past*. At any rate, he will then be free from the influence of the sorceress Syrene. His only problem should be how to return to the present. The powers he has should not be sufficient to allow him to break the time-barrier.

So the next question would seem to be: How will *Superman-present* get back in time to help himself? Or can he? I see two possible ways he could use to travel back in time to rescue his twin. First, *Supergirl* could wrap him up in her cape and take him through the time-barrier. This is unlikely, since Satanis probably made his barrier proof to Kryptonians. (Wait a second. Satanis made no barrier. Oops.) In that case, the writer will conveniently forget about the Maid of Might.

The second possibility I can think of is for *Superman-present* to use *The Flash's* Cosmic Treadmill. Upon their return, they can have *Zatanna* combine them again. Of course, *Superman-present* may not go back in time to *Superman-past* at all, at which point all these speculations become moot. Eh bien, C'est la vie.

JEF PECKHAM
503 Mariatt Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506

*****

Dear Julie and Bob...err...Tamsyn,

"Something Fishy" in *ACTION* #537 left a pleasant aftertaste. Bob Rozakis' upbeat *Aquaman* tale was just what the issue needed. So this redhead really is Mera! Bob sure is full of surprises! (I had been hoping it was really the Sea King's wife all along.) But how she escaped from her dimensional prison and why she can't fully control her water-powers are questions that must wait, eh?

KEVIN FISCHER
1711 Black Oak Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910

*And when we answered those questions in #538, Kevin, you came up with more questions (as the rest of you readers will see in a moment). We know this because we're pairing your letters on both issues to announce that we're closing the gap between the time a story appears and your comments see print. Upcoming, led off by your Aqua-review, are reader-reactions to ACTION #538.*

*And by the way, Kevin, while Tamsyn O'Flynn has taken over the lettercol assignments in some of Julie's books, I'm still handling this column and Metropolis Mailbag in SUPERMAN.—BR*

*****

Dear Julie and Bob,

"Mera, Mera on the Wave..." at least revealed the answer to the question, "Is that really Mera?" Now that we know that it is and it isn't, we've got a new batch of queries: "Why is the 'other self' in Mera trying to kill *Aquaman*?" "Who is the other presence?" and "How did it possess Mera in the first place?" The story bombards the reader with one mystery after another! I'm breathlessly awaiting the conclusion to this sea saga!

KEVIN FISCHER
1711 Black Oak Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910

*****

Dear Julie,

*ACTION COMICS* sure has taken a dramatic turn for the better the past few issues, and this feat is even more amazing when you realize that Marv Wolfman and Mike W. Barr have been scripting different chapters of the same story with absolutely no loss to continuity or plot. *Superman* has been put through so much since being split in two, and although it has been hard for him, it has been great for us readers. Two new fantastic villains in the forms of the *Mole* and *Jackhammer*, the *Omega Men*, the new *Teen Titans*, *Cave Carson* and large roles for Lois and Jimmy have all made this *ACTION* strip a very impressive one to read. And this time it even got better with "The Measure of a Superman". We have seen *Superman* supposedly afraid of facing a super-villain before, but never when he was at only half his powers. *Jackhammer* really did a job on him the first time and it is no wonder that Kal found himself wondering if he were really afraid to face the guy again. These feelings provoked a childhood memory, and once again the valuable lessons of Ma and Pa Kent came to bear on Earth's Greatest Super-Hero.

We get this type of homeyness all the time in the new adventures of *Superboy*, but it is more a rarity in the Man of Steel's life, that it makes its effect all the more special. The final fight scene was great. Even though *Superman* gave it his full measure, it was the citizens of Metropolis who showed their measure for this man that they love, just as in *SUPERMAN II*, which gave him the second chance to live up to their hero worship. This was perhaps one of the finest endings we have had in a while and, although moralistic, it was not overbearing.

Finally, thanks for a reminder of Jimmy's make-up table, a look at Lois trying to change Clark and the creation of a great villain—*Jackhammer*. I hope he makes a comeback after having learned his lesson because next time he may not be so lucky as to have to deal with only half a *Superman*!

The art of Novick and Cainan was superb. Both are well established *Superman* artists, and that really showed here. In the absence of Swan, they can fill-in anytime.

Well, I see Bob Rozakis has added a different aspect to the duplicate Mera plot, as this is the right body but the wrong mind. But before the big revelation at the end, I was beginning to suspect something "fishy" as Mera's help was too conveniently endangering *Aquaman*. I have heard of a novice, but this was ridiculous. It did provide for some good undersea action as *Aquaman* was thrown from one death situation to another. As for the cliffhanger ending, I was, as I said, expecting something like this, though I will admit I was betting this wasn't Mera in the least. I can't wait for next issue and more.

KENT A. PHENIS
1321 N. Meridian St.
Apt. 913
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Dear Julius,

I have just finished reading *ACTION* #538. It was great because it incorporated some of the feeling from *SUPERMAN II*. In this story as well as in the movie, the fans stuck up for the Man of Steel when he looked like he was done for. I really like this in a story!

On the other hand, I really think you're dragging out this storyline. Why couldn't *Superman* return to the Fortress and come back with some gadget to defeat *Jackhammer*? Also, he could send *The Flash* into the future to contact the *Legion of Super-Heroes* for help. How about wrapping this whole thing up next issue?

RANDY CORMIER
P.O. Box 135
Westminster, CA 92708

*Well, Randy, it took a bit longer than one more issue, but we feel the plot was worth it. In any case, Superman is on to bigger and better things right now... and we hope you'll enjoy them!—BR*

*****

Dear Julie, Bob and Mike,

I thought *ACTION* #538 was an appealing chapter in *Superman*'s life. There were several lessons being taught in this one episode: 1) The true value of friendship. 2) The responsibilities *Superman* has to Metropolis. 3) You can face a foe more powerful than yourself and still win because you have the pride and dignity to never give up.

Thanks for showing in your story the importance of True Friendship and its importance in life's everyday experiences.

DOUG SPOONER
151 Nanti Street
Park Forest, IL 60466

*****

Dear Julie,

*ACTION* #538 was something special. While I was reading the big fight sequence, The Beatles' "Yesterday" came on the radio. Somehow, the protests of the public against *Jackhammer* were amplified and seemed... real. I could feel *Superman*'s pain and I actually shed a tear for him. Any comic that can do that is a classic in my book. Thanks for the experience.

FRED deBOOM
9372 Tidewater Circle
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

*Hmmm. We wonder if Superman could have been humming, "Yesterday... all my troubles seemed so far away" the way the song goes or if he improvised with "Yesterday... all my troubles are so far away in yesterday..."—BR*

*****

Dear Bob,

I can't understand why you are discontinuing *Air Wave*. Almost every letters page in the last twelve months has at least one letter praising him. In fact, we haven't seen one putting him down! So why is he being pink-slipped? Do you also have hundreds of letters saying "*Air Wave* is terrible! I'd rather die than read *Air Wave*!" stashed away? Does Alex Saviuk have problems drawing his costume? Is there a conspiracy? If you don't want him in *ACTION*, why not give him his own comic? Where's the DC Spirit?

DAVID LIPSON
5432 S. Ingleside
Chicago, IL 60615

*No, Dave, we don't have any letters from Air Wave haters (just about everyone who comments on him likes him), Alex has no trouble drawing the costume (or it's three—count 'em, three—variations, as shown in DC COMICS PRESENTS #55), and there isn't a conspiracy that we know of! There just doesn't seem to be a regular space to put him in right now... but with DC Mini-Series catching on (GREEN ARROW's coming up in February, in case you haven't heard!), maybe we can get AWa spot! How's that for spirit?—Bob Rozakis*

# MEANWHILE...

*The new DC is on the move!* And if our greatly increased comic sales, volume of fan mail and response in the fan press weren't proof enough, the recent pot-shots aimed our way from the editorial pages of our major competitor is the frosting on the cake that provides proof positive. No one will bother to take pot-shots at you unless you represent a threat to their position and/or security. If you expect the fire to be returned from *this* page though, you're in for a disappointment...that kind of battle is undignified.

I will try, honestly I will, to avoid heavy-handed hype and extravagant promises both in this column and in any promotional or advertising material aimed at you from DC. We know you're constantly bombarded with self-laudatory "look at the wonderfulness of ourselves" kind of advertising from the media and we don't want to add to the overkill. However, I've been in the comics business for better than 30 years and I've never had more fun than I'm having right now and I've never been more enthusiastic about comics and the future of comic books than I am at the moment that I write this and my enthusiasm *may* on occasion lead me to make glowing statements about this artist or that writer or yon new title. If that happens, please have compassion and forgive an old pro for being carried away by having some of his dreams come true!

Speaking of the above, we've just seen the completed first issue of Rönin by Frank Miller and may we say that it's a milestone in comic history... a comic saga that will take your breath away...an unparalleled event that must be seen to be believed. neat!

*Confirmed and special for 1983* checklist #1:

1. Frank Miller's **Ronin.** First issue on sale in April. 48 pages, full color, no ads. 6 issues in all.

2. **Green Arrow** mini-series. Mike W. Barr (of **Camelot 3000** fame) and Trevor von Eeden (exciting young artist). First issue on sale February 24. Four issues in all.

3. **DC Comics Presents Annual** by Elliot S. Maggin, Alex Toth and Terry Austin. On sale in April.

4. **Batman Annual** by Mike W. Barr and Michael Golden. On sale this summer.

5. **Atom** mini-series: "The Sword of the Atom" by Jan Strnad and Gil Kane. First issue on sale in May. 4 issues in all.

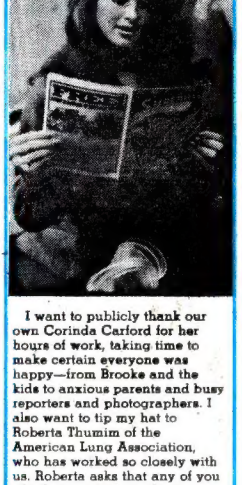
6. **JLA/Avengers** team-up by Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway and George Perez. On sale in May.

*Brooke Shields Visits DC*

For just a while recently, the most popular young hero at DC wasn't a member of the **New Teen Titans** or the **Legion of Super-Heroes** . Rather, it was mega-star Brooke Shields, who was here in her role as youth spokesperson for the American Lung Association to help kick off their "Superstuff" program.

"Superstuff" kits are intended for youngsters who have asthma, which is a lung disease that will sometimes leave the sufferer gasping for breath and thinking he or she might be suffocating. "Superstuff" helps kids learn about and live with asthma. Two million kids 16 and under have asthma. We at DC helped in packaging the kits, just another example of the kinds of things we do that you don't always see. You'll probably be seeing their commercials, which feature our favorite red, blue and yellow-hued Kryptonian proclaiming "Superman helps knock out asthma."

Of course you want to read about Our Miss Brooke. We all were thrilled to have her. She's a very attractive, very soft-spoken gal, and thoroughly pleasant to have around. Part of the press conference involved doing exercises with some asthmatic children, and she stretched and groaned along with them, smiling all the way. We managed to snap a photo of her while she was sneaking a peek at a recent **SUPERMAN**



I want to publicly thank our own Corinda Carlord for her hours of work, taking time to make certain everyone was happy—from Brooke and the kids to anxious parents and busy reporters and photographers. I also want to tip my hat to Roberta Thumim of the American Lung Association, who has worked so closely with us. Roberta asks that any of you who have questions about asthma or "Superstuff" contact your local American Lung Association or Write: American Lung Association, P.O. Box 596DC, New York, N.Y. 10001.

Mike Flynn
Promotion Manager